

I am writing to provide comments to the FCC on the E-Rate NPRM, proceeding 13-184. E-Rate has been very important to American schools because it has helped our students and teachers gain access to a wealth of online resources, communicate and collaborate, and develop the 21st century skills necessary for college and career. However, E-Rate funding levels have not kept pace with our state's bandwidth needs. I urge you to raise the E-Rate funding level to at least \$5 billion per year, which is close to the average demand level for each of the past two years.

As a parent, charter school board member, and former educator in Florida, I know that seamlessly infusing digital learning throughout the curriculum is a prerequisite for students to graduate from high school with the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in today's global economy. Access to high-speed broadband is the key to allowing modern teaching and learning to occur in all schools across the country.

In Polk County, many schools are able to use digital learning to personalize learning in order to meet Common Core State Standards and meet the needs of the 21st century. In fact, students in my own classes were able to use technology to make significant learning gains, collaborate with students around the world, and create award-winning multimedia. In fact, one of my students used technology resources to write and publish a short novel that became an Amazon best seller. While my students had access to these opportunities to learn and succeed, students and teachers at other schools were not able to engage the same powerful learning activities due to network limitations. The need for a reliable high-speed network is real now and is only going to increase in the near future.

The E-Rate program has been a phenomenal success in bringing internet access to almost every classroom in America. In the last funding cycle, applications from schools and libraries requested a total of more than \$5 billion—twice the amount of available funding. I respectfully urge the FCC to increase funding for the E-Rate program to at least \$5 billion to meet this demand. All students need access to high-speed broadband. Our nation's future depends on their success.

Best regards,
Nancye Blair Black